

Message Text

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INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 180890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PFOR, RO

SUBJECT: MIRCEA DEFECTOR UNGUREANU DECLINES TO RETURN TO
HIS SHIP

REFS: A) STATE 176924; B) BUCHAREST 4254; C) BUCHAREST
4226

1. MEETING BETWEEN ROMANIAN OFFICIALS AND MIRCEA CREW-
MEMBER CRISTIAN UNGUREANU TOOK PLACE AT INS OFFICE IN
NYC AT 3:00 PM JULY 20. PRESENT WERE UNGUREANU; FSO
JAY KATZEN, USUN, ROMANIAN LANGUAGE OFFICER; GEORGE IONITA,
DCM, ROMANIAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON; COMMANDANTE EUGEN ISPAS,
CAPTAIN OF THE MIRCEA; AND COMMANDANTE LUCIAN PANA,
COMMANDANT OF CADETS ABOARD THE MIRCEA. UNGUREANU
DECLINED TO RETURN TO THE SHIP.

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2. ROMANIANS ATTEMPTED INTENSELY EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO UNGUREANU, PRODUCING A LETTER FROM HIS MOTHER, A PICTURE OF HIM AS A CHILD AT HOME WITH HIS MOTHER, AND URGING THAT NOTHING WOULD BE HELD AGAINST HIM IF HE RETURNED TO HIS FAMILY AND FATHERLAND. ASKED WHETHER HE HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO ANY COERCION OR BLANDISHMENT, OR WHETHER HE AND OTHER DEFECTING MIRCEA SEAMAN VASIU "HAD ANY CONNECTION," UNGUREANU SAID NO. HE HAD MADE UP HIS MIND

FOUR MONTHS AGO, UNGUREANU SAID, WHEN HE SIGNED UP FOR THE MIRCEA'S VOYAGE. HIS MOTIVE IS TO SEEK A BETTER, FREER LIFE THAN IS POSSIBLE IN ROMANIA. ROMANIAN OFFICIALS ABANDONED ATTEMPT ONLY AFTER RINGING EVERY PERSONAL AND PATRIOTIC CHANGE THEY COULD: "YOU HAVE NO FUTURE HERE, THINK OF YOUR POOR MOTHER CRYING AT HOME" ETC.

3. NO MENTION WAS MADE TO KATZEN OF MIRCEA'S PLANS.

4. WE HAVE AGAIN UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTEMPTED TO PERSUADE VASIU TO AGREE TO A MEETING WITH ROMANIAN OFFICIALS. WE UNDERSTAND HE IS DEAD SET AGAINST.

5. IONITA AND GASPAR CALLED ON ANDREWS AT 10:00 AM JULY 21. IONITA NOTED GOR UNDERSTANDS FROM JULY 20 INTERVIEW WITH UNGUREANU THAT HE DOES NOT WISH TO RETURN TO ROMANIA. HOWEVER, GOR "DESIRES AND REQUESTS US AUTHORITIES TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO RETURN BOTH VASIU AND UNGUREANU TO THE MIRCEA BEFORE SHE SAILS FROM PHILADELPHIA." IONITA POINTED OUT THAT GOR BELIEVES A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN THESE TWO, WHO ARE MILITARY PERSONNEL, AND "OTHERS" WHO MAY CHOOSE TO REMAIN IN THE US. ANDREWS REPLIED THAT HE WAS UNAWARE OF ANY GROUNDS IN US LAW WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR SUCH A DISTINCTION BUT WOULD ENQUIRE.

6. IONITA DID NOT MENTION POSSIBILITY THAT MIRCEA MIGHT BE RECALLED IF THE SAILORS ARE NOT RETURNED, BUT THIS IS CLEARLY A POSSIBILITY. WE WILL NOT REPLY FORMALLY TO IONITA'S DEMARCHE UNTIL HE ENQUIRES AGAIN.
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WE WILL THEN STATE THAT THERE IS NO LEGAL PROVISION UNDER WHICH WE CAN REQUIRE THE TWO SAILORS TO RETURN TO THEIR SHIP, BUT THAT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO DO SO OF COURSE REMAINS. WE WILL ALSO ASK IONITA WHETHER GOR OFFER OF AMNESTY, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WAS MADE TO UNGUREANU DURING INTERVIEW WITH HIM JULY 20, REMAINS VALID, AND IF IT ALSO EXTENDS TO VASIU. WE ARE PREPARED TO RELAY THAT OFFER TO VASIU

AND UNGUREANU IF IONITA CAN MAKE IT. ROBINSON

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